

Frequently Asked Questions about Greenways

What are Greenways?

"A linear open space; a corridor composed of natural vegetation. Greenways can be used to create connected networks of open space that include traditional parks and natural areas."

<http://www.smartgrowth.org> "A linear open space established along a corridor, such as a river or railroad right-of way, and usually developed for non-vehicular public use. Examples include the Platte River Greenway in Denver, the Capital Area Greenway in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the Willamette Greenway in Portland, Oregon."

<http://www.ci.norman.ok.us/planning/greenbelt/glossary.htm>

Also see these links for more definitions:

<http://www.umass.edu/greenway/Greenways/2GR-def.html>

<http://www.aevv-egwa.org>

What kinds of trails are being planned for the Salado and Leon Creek and Medina River Greenways?

The trails in the Salado and Leon Creek and Medina River Greenways are being designed to serve as continuous, connective and universally accessible paths. They are intended to serve all non-motorized modes of transportation including bicycles, pedestrians, wheelchairs, etc. Nationally, this type of path is called a Multi-Use or Shared-Use Path. It is described in the Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 1999, produced by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials [AASHTO]. Use of this guidance was codified into our design standards in the San Antonio Parks and Recreation System Plan, Volume 2: Planning and Design Guidelines for Creek-Based Greenway Parks, adopted by City Council in May 2001 and updated and adopted by City Council in May 2006. In keeping with this guidance, we are generally developing 10-foot wide, paved paths. The width is minimal for two directional travel on paths that share both pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The type of paving is dependent on the actual conditions in each location. Since these paths traverse relatively extreme conditions over long distances, they must be capable of wearing well over time with minimal maintenance. The trails must also be capable of maintaining their accessibility over time. See this link for more information: <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/de/shared.htm>.

Will the paths be ADA accessible?

Yes. The path systems are being designed in accordance with the U.S. Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines and Texas Accessibility Standards for accessibility on Shared-Use Paths. This requires that the paths be constructed in such a way that minimizes slopes and provides slip-resistant surfaces that are free of obstacles. These paths must also be continuous and have easy to read signage to help finding one's way, and other information. Hard surfaces are being used to minimize damage from flooding and tree roots so that the paths remain usable for a number years with minimal maintenance.

Will the Greenway Parks be pet friendly?

Pets are allowed on leash. Bags will be available in a dispenser to make it easier to pick up after your pet.

What are the economic benefits of a trail system?

Many important studies have been conducted at Texas A&M University and others. In most cases, property values increase relative to proximity to the Greenway. Local businesses can realize benefits in trades that serve refreshments or offer products such as bikes or jogging shoes that relate to the paths. Residential and commercial properties become more desirable for their proximity to the Greenway and the easy access to exercise and commuting routes. <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/adjacent/OmahaStudy.html>
<http://americantrails.org/resources/railtrails/avonfence.html>

Please note the following web links for more information:

<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/adjacent/>
<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/economics/index.html>
<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/index.html>

For information on the effects of Greenways and Greenway Trails on property values see the work of Dr Crompton of Texas A&M University:

<http://rptsweb.tamu.edu/faculty/crompton-selected-articles.htm>
<http://rptsweb.tamu.edu/faculty/Crompton/Kam/Articles/4.8.pdf>

Are off-road vehicles prohibited from the trails/park?

All private motorized vehicles are restricted to roads and parking areas on all park property. Emergency vehicles and those vehicles used in the maintenance of the Greenway corridor are allowable as needed.

Will any other trails be constructed?

This project calls for development of the Shared-Use Paths only. Future projects could include development of natural surface nature trails and mountain biking trails. These are best developed through the help of volunteer organizations.

What kind of signs will be posted?

Regulatory, informational, and wayfinding signage will be placed at trailheads and along the trail system. Regulatory signage indicates the rules of the park and provides critical information about safety and usage hours. Informational, or educational, signage can include interpretive signs describing the history, culture, and ecology of the area. Wayfinding signage provides maps to assist in navigation and finding connections to other modes of transportation or to access points and points of interest.

Will the Parks be lighted for nighttime use?

These facilities will only be open for use during daylight hours. Trailhead parking areas will have security lighting. If a disturbance is noted at night, please call 911 immediately and a Park Police officer or a SAPD officer will investigate.

How often will Park Police patrol the Greenways?

Park Police will patrol each segment daily by ATV and/or by mountain bike. They can always be contacted by calling 311 or, in an emergency, by calling 911.

How will emergencies be handled?

Park Police can carry injured persons out of the Greenway on a trailer mounted on an ATV. Other emergency vehicles will be able to access the Greenways on the Shared Use Path if necessary.

What effect will the paths and Greenways have on security in the adjoining communities?

Many studies have been conducted in the United States to address this concern. Crime rates are not seen to increase, and in some cases have been shown to decline. This is because Greenway paths are typically installed in areas that had previously been underutilized. Use by local citizens reduces crime by adding more visibility and positive activity to those areas.

Please see the following link for more information on safety near Greenways:

<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/adjacent/safecomm.pdf#search=%22rail%20trails%20and%20safe%20communities%22>
<http://americantrails.org/resources/adjacent/mohawkhudsonstudy.html>

What about negative aspects of “outsiders” parking along streets and in front of houses to access the path/park?

Access points along neighborhood streets are only meant to serve those neighborhoods residents. Uncivil behavior by anyone parking on those streets to access the Greenway should be reported via 911. Others that come by vehicle to enjoy the trail system should utilize parking provided at the designated trailheads.

How will maintenance be handled?

The Parks and Recreation Department will provide regular maintenance along the Greenways. Trash along the paths will be removed regularly, as will obstructions such as low growing branches. Mowing will only be done where it will foster the growth of native grasses and wildflowers in order to support clear visibility along the path as well as the natural flora. This will entail a maximum of three mowings per year when the native grasses and wildflowers have mature seeds that will be spread by the action of the mowers.

How often will stormwater debris be removed?

The Stormwater Management Division of the Public Works Department will periodically send crews into areas to remove debris from recent storm events. Barring any major blockages, they will service each area in a 3-5 year cycle.

How will sewer spills be handled?

Report sewage overflows as you would currently do, to SAWS at 704-7297.